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Fisher Island millionaire headed back to jail for marrying off his teen son

BY DAVID OVALLE

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Fisher Island millionaire Dan Rotta, guilty of contempt of court for marrying off his teenage son, may soon be returning to jail after losing his appeal Wednesday.

Back in July, a Miami-Dade circuit judge sentenced Rotta to 180 days jail for allowing his 16-year-old son to get hitched in Las Vegas to his housekeeper's daughter.

The court had ordered Rotta, 66, to take his troubled son to a Utah boarding school. Instead, Rotta took his son to Las Vegas for the shotgun wedding, which "emancipated" the teen from the judge's oversight.

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His lawyers late last month argued his case before the Third District Court of Appeal. On Wednesday, the appeals court, without an opinion, upheld the judge's decision.

Whether Rotta appeals remains to be seen. He cannot appeal directly to the Florida Supreme Court.

At the time, Circuit Judge John Schlesinger wrote that Rotta's conduct was "simply shocking" and "clearly intended to thwart" the court's order to admit the teen into the Logan River Academy in Utah.

Rotta only served nine days in jail before posting \$10,000 pending the appeal.

The drama was part of long-running legal disputes stemming from divorce proceedings between Rotta and ex-wife Renee Rotta of Aventura.

Rotta, a wealthy businessman, made his money as president of a New York City company that imported Seiko watches through the so-called “gray market,” which allows companies to buy brand-name products overseas and sell them in the U.S. at a discount.

His teenage son had a history of lashing out and had attended several boarding schools. His mother had asked the court to send him to the “therapeutic” boarding school in Utah.

The teen was due to report to the school in December 2010. But according to the court, one day after the son’s 16th birthday that month, Rotta took him to Las Vegas. With them: Diana Esperanza Mendoza Guzman, the family’s housekeeper’s 18-year-old Colombian-born daughter.

Rotta, who shared joint custody with his wife, insisted the relationship was legitimate. In Nevada, a minor only needs one parental signature to consent to an underage marriage.

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